

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the following Paragraphs with the following rewritten in amendment format:

Paragraph 3 starting at Line 13 on Page 20:

One preferably works in an aqueous medium. Preferably an insoluble oxide, a hydroxide or an oxy-hydrate of Al Al_2O_3 is used as the starting material. The other components are added as water soluble salts, preferably carbonates, hydrogen carbonates or acetates. Following a grinding and dispersion step, the resulting suspension is dried, preferably in a spray drying process and the powder is subsequently subjected to an annealing treatment. The powder is annealed at temperatures of 500°C to 1800°C in the presence of air for a duration of 1 to 20 hours to form single-phase, oxidic agglomerates having an average diameter of between 1-200 μm and a specific surface area of between 0.1 and 40 m^2/g .

Paragraph 4 starting at Line 14 on Page 8:

According to a first alternative, the powder-like thermal insulating material is produced by adding an insoluble oxide, a hydroxide or an oxygen hydrate of Al_2O_3 as the starting material to an aqueous or alcoholic medium, in particular methanol, ethanol or isopropanol, and mixtures thereof, the remaining portions of the first component being soluble salts, preferably carbonates, hydrogen carbonates or acetates. The starting material is dissolved in the medium, the formed suspension is dried, preferably after a grinding and dispersion step, preferably spray dried, and the resulting powder is subsequently subjected to an annealing treatment.

Paragraph 2 starting at Line 11 on Page 9:

According to a second alternative for the powder production, the compounds of the first component are mixed in powder form as oxides or salts in a mixer, preferably a drum or tumbling grinder, where preferably grinding bodies of Al_2O_3 or stabilised ZrO_2 , or mixtures of Al_2O_3 and ZrO_2 are employed. The powder is subsequently granulated and subjected to an annealing treatment.